

Weekly Column for August 25<sup>th</sup>

As we near Labor Day weekend, many people are getting ready for one final mini-vacation before it's back to school time. Of course, one major glitch in those plans is the current gas prices, which are higher than any time in a generation.

Because of the continuing rise of prices, in the City of Troy we have begun to make changes to our vehicle fleet to become more efficient. Recently we had two new vehicles delivered to the City that are top of the line when it comes to fuel efficiency in gas-powered cars. In the past the City has been quick to purchase large cars that guzzled gas. Now we have two new Ford Focus's for the engineering and code enforcement departments.

The Engineering Department, also in need of constant transportation for bulky equipment, has purchased an SUV that is also fuel efficient for its line. Each and every day these vehicles are out on the road checking out Code Enforcement problems in certain neighborhoods, looking at the stabilization of buildings, approving new projects. And each day the cost of gas is rising, so the cost of business is as well. I want to thank the City Council for helping us in these cost saving measures.

This year, in the 2005 budget, which is a very conservative spending plan, we allocated an additional 20 percent for gas, a dramatic increase to \$250,000. Unfortunately, gas prices have risen higher than we originally thought, so we are again making changes to the budget. Like you, we have to make changes when unexpected costs come up, and I just want to ensure everyone that our minds are geared towards saving money, and we hope these new vehicles come in handy on the gas end of things.

On another somewhat sad note, the Collar City Live Series comes to a close this weekend with the Take Me To The River Blues Festival on Sunday night in Riverfront Park. The series this year has been a tremendous success and the culmination will be exciting.

Normally the shows on Sunday begin at 7 p.m., but this week we have an announced starting time of 2 p.m. for the festival. Headlining the event will be California based blues guitarist and singer James Armstrong. It should be a great event for the whole family, so take some time and come on down to Riverfront Park on Sunday.

Have a great weekend!

Harry J Tutunjian  
Mayor of Troy